



March 2015

OPERATIONAL CONTRACT SUPPORT

Actions Needed to
Enhance the
Collection,
Integration, and
Sharing of Lessons
Learned

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Why GAO Did This Study

DOD has spent billions of dollars on contract support during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2002 and anticipates continuing its heavy reliance on contractors in future operations. Generally, OCS is the process of planning for and obtaining needed supplies and services from commercial sources in support of joint operations. GAO has previously identified long-standing concerns with DOD's efforts to institutionalize OCS.

This report examines the extent to which (1) the geographic combatant commands and the services collect OCS issues to develop lessons learned, (2) DOD has a focal point for integrating OCS issues from the JLLP, and (3) DOD organizations use JLLIS to share OCS issues and lessons learned. GAO evaluated OCS and lessons-learned guidance and plans and met with DOD commands and offices responsible for OCS planning, integration, policy, and contractor-management functions.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends, among other things, that DOD and the services (1) issue service-wide OCS lessons-learned guidance; (2) establish an OCS training requirement for senior leaders; (3) ensure the planned OCS joint proponent's roles and responsibilities include integrating OCS issues from the JLLP; and (4) improve JLLIS's functionality. DOD concurred with three of these recommendations, but partially concurred with the third recommendation, stating the need to first evaluate its courses of action before establishing such a proponent. GAO believes this recommendation is still valid, as discussed in the report.

View [GAO-15-243](#). For more information, contact Cary Russell at (202) 512-5431 or russellc@gao.gov.

OPERATIONAL CONTRACT SUPPORT

Actions Needed to Enhance the Collection, Integration, and Sharing of Lessons Learned

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense's (DOD) geographic combatant commands are improving efforts to collect operational contract support (OCS) issues from operations and exercises needed to develop lessons learned, but the military services are generally not collecting them. Currently, four of the six geographic combatant commands—U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Northern Command, and U.S. Southern Command—have identified OCS as a critical capability in their joint training plans and have incorporated it into planning, execution, and assessment of exercises, while U.S. European Command and U.S. Pacific Command continue to make progress doing so. However, with the exception of the Army, the military services and their component commands are not generally collecting OCS issues to develop lessons learned. Officials from the Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy stated that the lack of OCS awareness caused by not having (1) service-wide guidance on collecting OCS issues and (2) an OCS training requirement for senior leaders hinders their ability to develop lessons learned. Without guidance and a training requirement for senior leaders to improve OCS awareness, it will be difficult for DOD to ensure consistent collection of OCS issues and build on efficiencies that the services have identified to adequately plan for the use of contractor support.

DOD has made progress resolving some OCS issues, but does not have a focal point for integrating OCS issues identified through the Joint Lessons Learned Program (JLLP). The combatant commands and services are to use the JLLP to develop lessons learned related to joint capabilities from operations and exercises to improve areas such as doctrine and training. Currently, there are multiple organizations across DOD that are working on separate and sometimes disjointed OCS lessons-learned efforts. DOD has undertaken initial efforts to assign an OCS joint proponent with lessons-learned responsibilities. A joint proponent is an entity intended to lead collaborative development and integration of joint capability. However, DOD has not determined whether the joint proponent will be responsible for providing formal oversight and integration of OCS issues from the JLLP. As it develops the joint proponent, including such roles and responsibilities will help better position DOD to integrate all OCS issues from the JLLP, thereby addressing any gaps in its efforts.

DOD organizations do not consistently use the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) to share OCS issues and lessons learned due to the system's limited functionality. JLLIS is the JLLP's system of record and is to facilitate the DOD-wide collection and sharing of lessons learned. However, GAO found that geographic combatant commands and the Army use JLLIS to varying degrees. Further, DOD is generally not sharing OCS lessons learned in JLLIS because the system is not functional for users searching OCS issues due to, among other reasons, not having an OCS label and not having a designated location for sharing OCS lessons learned. JLLIS's limited functionality impedes information sharing department-wide. Until DOD improves the functionality of JLLIS, it will be difficult for users to search for OCS issues, and DOD runs the risk of not being able to systematically track and share OCS lessons learned department-wide, which could negatively affect joint force development and readiness.

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Abbreviations

DOD	Department of Defense
JCASO	Joint Contingency Acquisition Support Office
JLLIS	Joint Lessons Learned Information System
JLLP	Joint Lessons Learned Program
OCS	Operational Contract Support

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March 16, 2015

Congressional Committees

Since 2002, the Department of Defense (DOD) has spent billions of dollars on contract support during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan,¹ and anticipates continuing its heavy reliance on contractors to support ongoing and future operations.² According to Joint Publication 4-10, operational contract support (OCS) is the process of planning for and obtaining supplies, services, and construction from commercial sources in support of joint operations.³ Given the importance of OCS capabilities to current and future operations, the House Armed Services Committee expressed its support in 2012 for efforts to collect lessons learned related to the full breadth of OCS, noting that past DOD efforts to collect lessons learned were slowed by a lack of resources and insufficient institutional support.⁴

Our prior body of work has also demonstrated a need to institutionalize OCS throughout the department and to collect and review OCS lessons learned. In December 2006, we found that there was no organization within DOD responsible for developing procedures to systematically collect and share its institutional knowledge regarding the use of contractors to support deployed forces.⁵ We recommended that DOD appoint a focal point to, among other things, lead and coordinate the development of a department-wide lessons-learned program to capture

¹Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, *Transforming Wartime Contracting: Controlling Costs, Reducing Risks* (August 2011).

²Department of Defense, Operational Contract Support Joint Concept (Oct. 7, 2013).

³Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub. 4-10, *Operational Contract Support* at GL-8 (July 16, 2014) (hereinafter cited as Joint Pub. 4-10 [July 16, 2014]). In a DOD regulation, the department defines operational contract support as the ability to orchestrate and synchronize the provision of integrated contract support and management of contractor personnel providing support to the joint force within a designated operational area. 32 C.F.R. § 158.3; Department of Defense Instruction 3020.41, *Operational Contract Support* (OCS) at 49 (Dec. 20, 2011) (hereinafter cited as DODI 3020.41 (Dec. 20, 2011)).

⁴H.R. Rep. No. 112-479, at 187-88 (2012).

⁵GAO, High-Level DOD Action Needed to Address Long-standing Problems with Management and Oversight of Contractors Supporting Deployed Forces, [GAO-07-145](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 18, 2006).

the experiences of units deployed to locations with OCS. DOD concurred with our recommendation, and stated that it would develop and implement a systematic strategy for capturing, retaining, and applying lessons learned on the use of contractor support to deployed forces, as discussed later in this report. In June 2010, we testified on the need for a cultural change in DOD that emphasized an awareness of OCS throughout all entities of the department to help address the challenges faced in ongoing and future contingency operations.⁶ Additionally, in our February 2013 report on high-risk areas in the federal government, we reported that DOD needed to sustain efforts to integrate OCS through policy, planning, and training for both current and future contingency operations.⁷ Also, in February 2013, we found that, with the exception of the Army, the other military services (Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force) had not issued comprehensive service-specific guidance that describes roles, responsibilities, and requirements to help integrate OCS into their planning efforts for contingency operations.⁸ We recommended that DOD fully integrate OCS into contingency planning in the military services, and the department concurred with our recommendation and took some actions to address it, as discussed later in this report. For a listing of relevant past GAO work, see the Related GAO Products list at the end of this report.

We performed our work for this report under the Comptroller General's authority to conduct evaluations on his own initiative, in light of congressional interest in DOD's efforts to institutionalize lessons learned related to OCS.⁹ This report examines the extent to which (1) the geographic combatant commands and the military services collect OCS issues to develop lessons learned; (2) DOD has a focal point for integrating OCS issues from the Joint Lessons Learned Program (JLLP);

⁶GAO, *Warfighter Support: Cultural Change Needed to Improve How DOD Plans for and Manages Operational Contract Support*, [GAO-10-829T](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2010).

⁷GAO, *High-Risk Series: An Update*, [GAO-13-283](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 14, 2013). Every 2 years at the start of a new Congress, GAO calls attention to agencies and program areas that are high risk due to their vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, or are most in need of transformation.

⁸GAO, *Warfighter Support: DOD Needs Additional Steps to Fully Integrate Operational Contract Support into Contingency Planning*, [GAO-13-212](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 8, 2013).

⁹See H.R. Rep. No. 112-479, at 187-88.

and (3) DOD organizations use the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) to share OCS issues and lessons learned.

To determine the extent to which the geographic combatant commands and the services collect OCS issues to develop lessons learned, we reviewed guidance including relevant provisions in part 158 of Title 32 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E,¹⁰ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Notice 3500.01,¹¹ and Joint Publication 4-10¹² to understand the roles and responsibilities of DOD entities, including the geographic combatant commands, the services, and the service component commands, regarding the collection of OCS issues. Additionally, we reviewed military department and service guidance, such as Army Regulation 11-33, Air Force Instruction 90-1601, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3500.37C, and Marine Corps Order 3504.1, to identify any service-specific policies, guidance, or responsibilities for the collection of issues.¹³ Additionally, we reviewed DOD's Joint Concept for OCS, which is intended to guide OCS capability development for the Joint Force 2020. Furthermore, we interviewed OCS and lessons-learned officials from the four military services, all six geographic combatant commands, and all the associated military service component commands to discuss their roles and responsibilities regarding the collection of OCS issues. We visited all six geographic combatant commands to conduct our interviews with them.

To determine the extent to which DOD has a focal point for integrating OCS issues from the JLLP, we compared the process for the integration of OCS lessons learned with guidance such as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, which identifies the primary objective

¹⁰Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, *Joint Lessons Learned Program* (Apr. 20, 2012) (hereinafter cited as CJCSI 3150.25E (Apr. 20, 2012)).

¹¹Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Notice 3500.01, *2014-2017 Chairman's Joint Training Guidance* (Oct. 10, 2013).

¹²Joint Pub. 4-10 (July 16, 2014).

¹³Army Regulation 11-33, *Army Lessons Learned Program (ALLP)* (Oct. 17, 2006); Air Force Instruction 90-1601, *Air Force Lessons Learned Program* (Dec. 18, 2013); Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3500.37C, *Navy Lessons Learned System (NLLS)* (Feb. 16, 2001); and Marine Corps Order 3504.1, *Marine Corps Lessons Learned Program (MCLLP) and the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL)* (July 31, 2006).

of the JLLP—to enhance joint capabilities by contributing to improvements in doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities as well as policy. Additionally, we reviewed the charter for the OCS Functional Capabilities Integration Board,¹⁴ the OCS Action Plan, and DOD Instruction 3020.41, which identify responsibilities related to OCS. Additionally, we reviewed DOD reports on OCS and lessons learned along with various GAO reports to understand DOD's progress integrating changes in OCS in doctrine, policy, and training, and education. We also interviewed officials who participate in the process for resolving or integrating OCS issues in doctrine, policy, training, and education curriculum—such as those from the Joint Staff, military services, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Program Support, OCS Functional Capabilities Integration Board, and Joint Contingency Acquisition Support Office—regarding the extent to which DOD has a focal point for integrating issues from the JLLP. We compared this information to federal internal-control standards that state a good internal-control environment requires that the agency's organizational structure clearly define key areas of authority and responsibility and establish appropriate lines of reporting.¹⁵

To determine the extent to which DOD organizations use JLLIS—the JLLP's system of record—to share OCS issues and lessons learned, we reviewed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E to identify the role of commanders with respect to sharing lessons learned and to identify the system of record for sharing those lessons. Additionally, we participated in a demonstration of JLLIS to understand and observe its capabilities. We also interviewed DOD officials, as described above, about their experiences using JLLIS from 2006, when the system was established, through December 2014. Furthermore, we used Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3150.25¹⁶ to understand the

¹⁴Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics) Memorandum, *Charter for the Department of Defense Operational Contract Support Functional Capabilities Integration Board* (June 27, 2014).

¹⁵GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#) (Washington, D.C.: November 1999).

¹⁶Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3150.25A, *Joint Lessons Learned Program* (Sept. 12, 2014); Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3150.25, *Joint Lessons-Learned Program* (Feb. 15, 2011). CJCSM 3150.25A superseded the earlier version of the manual during the course of our work.

JLLP phases—discovery, validation, integration, and evaluation.¹⁷ We compared this information to federal internal-control standards, which state that all significant events should be clearly documented and the documentation readily available.¹⁸ To address these objectives, we excluded from our work procurement-related issues and lessons learned from the acquisition community—for example, contracting officers.¹⁹ Additional information about our objectives, scope, and methodology is included in appendix I.

We conducted this performance audit from March 2014 to March 2015 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

DOD Entities with OCS-Related Roles and Responsibilities

OCS planning, integration, and policy roles and responsibilities, along with the associated contractor-management functions,²⁰ involve all levels of DOD command and staff, including the following entities:

- The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics has overall responsibility for establishing and publishing policies and procedures governing administrative oversight of defense contracts and for developing and overseeing the implementation of

¹⁷For the purposes of this report, the active and passive collection procedures of the discovery phase are referred to as issue collection.

¹⁸[GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#).

¹⁹DOD has a process for conducting pre- and postaward peer reviews for service contracts with an estimated value of \$1 billion or more. One of the objectives of these peer reviews is to facilitate the sharing of best practices and lessons learned across DOD. See Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy Memorandum, *Peer Reviews of Contracts for Supplies and Services* (Sept. 29, 2008).

²⁰In the context of OCS, “contractor management” refers to the oversight and integration of contractor personnel and associated equipment providing support to the joint force in a designated operational area. 32 C.F.R. § 158.3.

DOD-level OCS policy. Within this office, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Program Support is responsible for monitoring and managing the implementation of OCS policy.

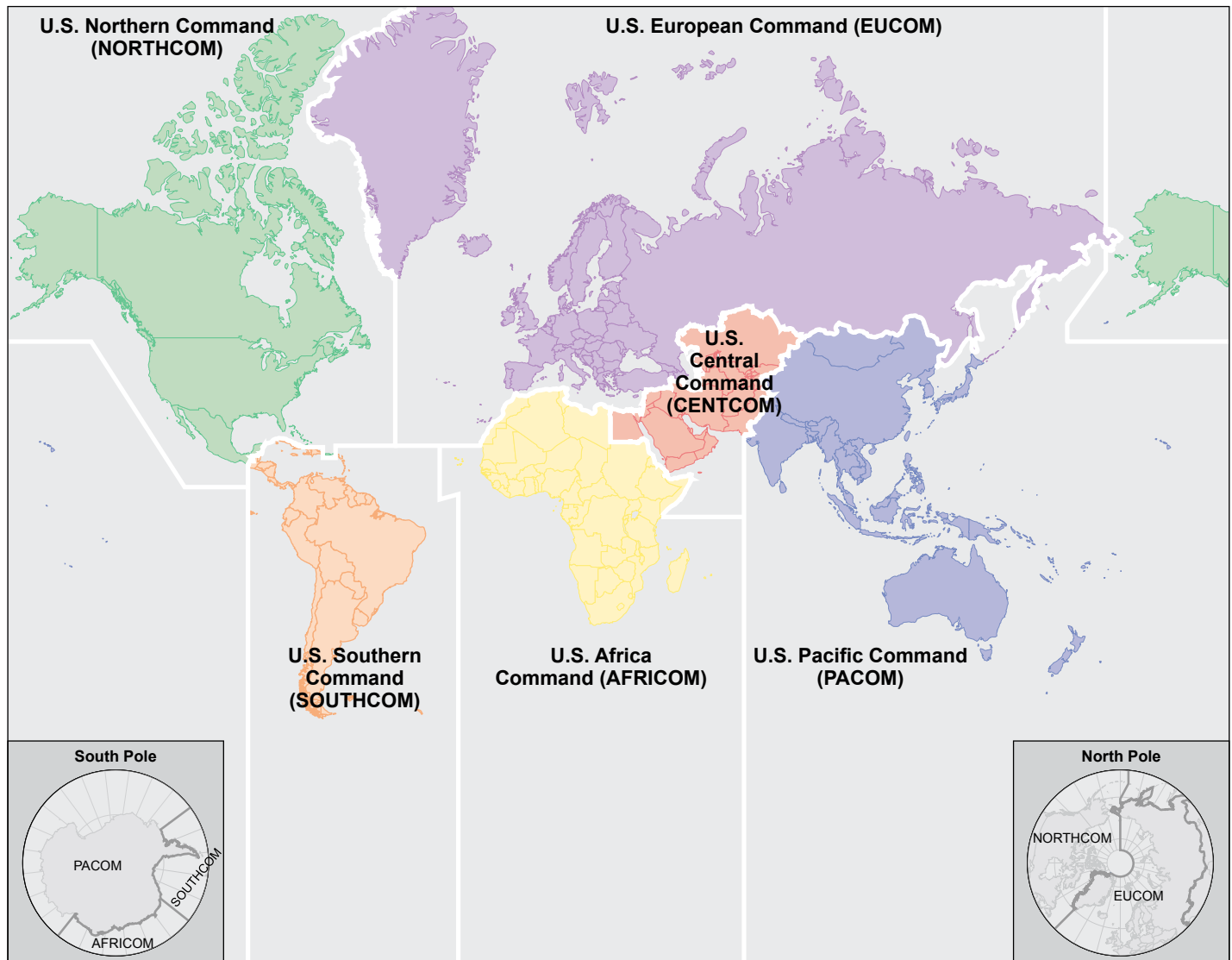
- The OCS Functional Capabilities Integration Board was created in March 2010 and serves as the main forum for the combatant commands, military departments, and defense agencies to address OCS capability issues for support to the joint warfighter, to include assessing and adopting appropriate lessons learned, and solutions affecting future contingency operations.
- The Joint Staff's Logistics Directorate (J-4) is the primary staff directorate on the Joint Staff for OCS matters and is responsible for developing OCS planning policy, related procedures, and templates, as well as ensuring that OCS policies and procedures are incorporated in relevant policy documents and doctrinal publications. J-4 created the Operational Contract Support & Services Division to reflect the increased Joint Staff workload related to institutionalizing OCS.
- The Defense Logistics Agency is responsible for providing worldwide logistics support to the military departments and the combatant commands as well as to other DOD components and federal agencies. It also provides OCS planning, integration, and exercises support through its Joint Contingency Acquisition Support Office (JCASO).
- The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force service component commands plan and execute OCS for their respective forces in accordance with guidance from their respective military departments and combatant commanders.
- The six geographic combatant commands, which are supported by multiple service component commands, play a key role in determining and synchronizing contracted support requirements and contracting planning, as well as executing OCS oversight. According to Joint Publication 4-10, proper joint-force guidance on common contract support-related matters is imperative for facilitating effective and efficient use of contractors in joint operations.²¹

In figure 1, we illustrate the six geographic combatant commands' areas of responsibility and show the locations of the service component commands that provide support in each of those areas.

²¹ See Joint Pub. 4-10, at II-8 (July 16, 2014).

Figure 1: Department of Defense's (DOD) Geographic Combatant Commands and Their Service Component Commands

Interactivity instructions:  Roll over the combatant command name to see headquarters locations.  See appendix II for the noninteractive, printer-friendly version.



Source: Department of Defense (DOD). | GAO-15-243

DOD's Joint Lessons Learned Program (JLLP)

DOD established the JLLP in 2000 to enhance joint capabilities through knowledge management in peacetime and wartime. The combatant commands and the military services are to use the JLLP to develop lessons learned related to joint capabilities by collecting issues from operations and exercises in order to make improvements to areas such as doctrine, policy, training, and education. For collected issues, according to CJCS Instruction 3150.25E, the combatant commands and the military services are to resolve and integrate them at the lowest organizational level possible, with corrective action taken as close to the issue occurrence as possible. An issue becomes a lesson learned once a DOD entity has implemented corrective action that has contributed to improved performance or that has increased capability at the strategic, operational, or tactical level.

According to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, JLLP knowledge management is enabled by the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS).²² As the JLLP's system of record, JLLIS is to facilitate the collection, management, and sharing of issues and lessons learned to improve the development and readiness of the joint force. An electronic database, JLLIS is supposed to be used to track progress by DOD stakeholders and other organizations involved in the collection of issues. Additionally, if an issue is resolved and determined to be a lesson learned, then it is to be published and shared using JLLIS for proper institutionalization and learning to improve the operational effectiveness of the joint force. According to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, organizations participating in the JLLP shall collaboratively exchange information (including issues and lessons learned) to the maximum extent possible.²³

The services have also established service-specific lessons-learned programs and processes that include the collecting, integration, and sharing of lessons learned in support of the JLLP. For example, the Air Force Lessons Learned Program allows Airmen from all functional areas to share their observations to help shape how the Air Force prepares for and executes future operations. The Air Force Lessons Learned Program is a "push-pull" process where members of the lessons-learned offices coordinate with functional subject-matter experts to "pull" data and

²²See CJCSI 3150.25E, encl. A, para. 3 (Apr. 20, 2012).

²³See *id.*

information by conducting interviews and after-action reviews, issuing flash bulletins, and generating formal issues identified. Reports are loaded into JLLIS so that Airmen can track progress and share knowledge.

DOD's Geographic Combatant Commands Are Improving Efforts to Collect OCS Issues Needed to Develop Lessons Learned, but the Military Services Are Not Generally Collecting OCS Issues

The Geographic Combatant Commands Collect Some OCS Issues from Operations and Are Improving Efforts to Collect OCS Issues from Exercises

DOD's geographic combatant commands have used large-scale operations as sources for collecting OCS issues. For example, in 2012, the U.S. Central Command, with support from JCASO, conducted interviews to collect issues experienced in OCS activities during Operation Iraqi Freedom / Operation New Dawn and made 24 recommendations within three general areas: contractor management, contract closeout, and transition planning. For instance, in the area of transition planning, the command found that OCS planning in Iraq was not fully integrated into the overall joint task force drawdown or transition plans. Therefore, the command recommended that OCS planners be sourced and embedded with the operations directorate 2 years prior to a transition so that contract support requirements between DOD and the Department of State could be properly identified. In Afghanistan, senior U.S. Central Command and U.S. Forces Afghanistan officials provided observations and insights about the OCS Integration Cell (formerly the

OCS Drawdown Cell)²⁴ and reported having several issues that could be used to inform contractor management and OCS planning.²⁵ For example, the officials reported the need to change the ad hoc organization of the cell, reduce overlap and confusion of duties and responsibilities, and better integrate contracting support into the planning process. In Afghanistan, officials recommended changing the OCS Integration Cell's organization and physical location, codifying in doctrine the OCS Integration Cell authorities prior to a contingency, improving sharing of OCS-related information with stakeholders, and combining OCS and operational-contracting functions to improve OCS planning and execution, among other things.

Smaller-scale operations have also provided the geographic combatant commands with opportunities to collect OCS issues that affect their command. For example, U.S. Pacific Command officials observed OCS issues during Operation Tomodachi in 2011, following the earthquake and tsunami near Japan. Specifically, an observation at U.S. Pacific Command recommended that the command establish a Joint Theater Support Contracting Command to coordinate contracting during the disaster, which subsequently led the command to develop an instruction that includes considerations and procedures for establishing a Joint Theater Support Contracting Command and to hold a rehearsal-of-concept drill. In another smaller-scale operation, Operation Unified Response in Haiti, U.S. Southern Command identified several OCS issues. Specifically, the command identified the need to improve its Synchronized Predeployment and Operational Tracker policy,²⁶ develop more OCS capabilities at the military service component commands, and establish operational frameworks to enable cross-service OCS collaboration within the context of theater security cooperation efforts.

²⁴The OCS Drawdown Cell was established in August 2012 with a mission to manage the programmatic drawdown of contracts, the contractor workforce, and associated equipment in the Combined Joint Operations Area–Afghanistan.

²⁵JCASO conducted three interviews in early 2014 with senior officials from U.S. Central Command and U.S. Forces Afghanistan as part of its Joint Lessons Learned Collection.

²⁶Synchronized Predeployment and Operational Tracker is the central data repository for information on contracts and contractor personnel in contingency operations. For more information, see GAO, *Contractor Personnel Tracking System Needs Better Plans and Guidance*, [GAO-15-250](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 18, 2015). U.S. Southern Command's policy provides guidance to implement this contractor accountability system during contingency and other operations.

Additionally, the geographic combatant commands are improving efforts to collect OCS issues during exercises. The geographic combatant commands are to use DOD's Joint Training System in planning, executing, and assessing joint training, like exercises.²⁷ The Joint Training System provides an integrated, requirements-based method for aligning joint training programs with assigned missions consistent with command priorities, capabilities, and available resources. We have previously reported that evaluating lessons learned and identifying issues for corrective actions are fundamental components of DOD's training and exercise process.²⁸ We recommended that DOD develop guidance with specific criteria for postexercise documentation, particularly to allow the results and lessons learned from exercises to be easily reviewed and compared. DOD agreed that such information should be provided in a standardized format that can be easily accessed and understood by authorized organizations that might benefit from such knowledge. However, DOD cautioned that any actions taken in response to this recommendation must accommodate constraints regarding classified information. As of December 2014, four of the six geographic combatant commands—U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Northern Command, and U.S. Southern Command—have identified OCS as a critical capability in their joint training plans and have integrated it into the planning, execution, and assessment of training events. For example, U.S. Southern Command has identified conducting OCS as a critical capability and developed an associated supporting task, which it integrates into its exercises like PANAMAX and Integrated Advance.²⁹

In the past year, U.S. European Command has identified OCS as a critical capability in its joint training plans, but it has not yet completed a full cycle of planning, executing, and assessing training events that include OCS as a critical capability. The command expects to complete the other phases of the cycle following its forthcoming exercises. Prior to

²⁷ See generally Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3500.01H, *Joint Training Policy for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Apr. 25, 2014).

²⁸ GAO, *Homeland Defense: U.S. Northern Command Has a Strong Exercise Program, but Involvement of Interagency Partners and States Can Be Improved*, [GAO-09-849](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2009).

²⁹ The PANAMAX exercise is an annual U.S. Southern Command–sponsored multinational training exercise series that focuses on ensuring the defense of the Panama Canal. The Integrated Advance exercise focuses on improving coordination with interagency partners in response to a mass migration event in the Caribbean.

the inclusion of OCS as a critical capability in its joint training plans, the command included prescribed OCS-related events or master-scenario events intended to guide exercises toward specific outcomes. According to U.S. European Command officials, they have included OCS-related master-scenario events as part of their exercises since 2008. While a training proficiency assessment of these events is not typically performed by the geographic combatant commands, master-scenario events can provide command staff the opportunity to perform some OCS-related tasks and familiarize themselves with OCS processes, among other things. U.S. Pacific Command has not identified OCS as a critical capability in the earliest phase of the Joint Training System, which informs later phases like planning, execution, and assessment of OCS. However, the command plans to progressively increase OCS play through training objectives and master-scenario events in forthcoming exercises—such as the OCS Joint Exercise-15 and Talisman Saber in 2015—to improve OCS issue-collection efforts.

With the Exception of the Army, the Military Services Are Not Generally Collecting OCS Issues

With the exception of the Army, the military services and their component commands are not generally collecting OCS issues needed to develop lessons learned. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E requires the services to conduct a service lessons-learned program that includes active and passive collection.³⁰ Furthermore, guidance from the military departments and services, such as Army Regulation 11-33, Air Force Instruction 90-1601, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3500.37C, and Marine Corps Order 3504.1, establish lessons-learned programs, procedures, and responsibilities, including for the collection of lessons learned.³¹

³⁰See CJCSI 3150.25E, encl. C, para. 9.e (Apr. 20, 2012). Specifically, the services are to conduct a lessons-learned program with responsibilities including executing small-scale active collection through direct observation of service-level events and activities. When service-level active collection requirements exceed service capabilities, the service may request support from other commands, services, or agencies. The program responsibilities also include coordinating service active collection activities within a combatant command's theater. See *id.*

³¹See generally Army Regulation 11-33, *Army Lessons Learned Program (ALLP)* (Oct. 17, 2006); Air Force Instruction 90-1601, *Air Force Lessons Learned Program* (Dec. 18, 2013); Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3500.37C, *Navy Lessons Learned System (NLLS)* (Feb. 16, 2001); Marine Corps Order 3504.1, *Marine Corps Lessons Learned Program (MCLLP) and the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL)* (July 31, 2006).

The Army collects OCS issues through its dedicated OCS organizations, active collection tools, training, and comprehensive service-wide OCS guidance. For example, the Army established the Acquisition, Logistics and Technology-Integration Office, which is dedicated to leading the development and integration of OCS across the Army and the Army's OCS Lessons Learned Program. Additionally, the Army's Acquisition, Logistics and Technology-Integration Office has fully integrated with the Combined Arms Support Command's Reverse Collection and Analysis Team Forum, which collects OCS issues from senior unit leaders returning from a deployed operation. The program includes live after-action reviews, commander interviews, and an OCS roundtable discussion with the commander and staff, all of which work as issue-collection tools. In response to an OCS issue identified through its lessons-learned program, the Army also developed and instituted a 10-day optional OCS course to prepare military and civilian personnel to develop acquisition-ready requirements and manage a unit's overall contract support responsibilities. Graduates receive the Army's 3C additional skill identifier. According to Army officials, the Army's training has also improved its service members' overall understanding of the importance of OCS to mission success. In addition to training, the Army has developed comprehensive service-wide OCS guidance—such as the OCS Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures manual and several OCS-related handbooks—to provide tactical, service-specific details to its staff. According to the Army, the intent of this OCS Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures manual is to assist commanders in correctly implementing OCS in the areas of planning, integrating, managing, and synchronizing OCS. The manual outlines key OCS terms, the Army's OCS structure, organizational initiatives, planning, execution, and contractor management.³²

While the Army has organization, tools, training, and guidance for collecting OCS issues, its service component commands collect OCS issues to varying degrees. For example, Army Northern Command officials stated that they collected several OCS issues after participating in the Joint Staff's OCS exercise hosted by U.S. Northern Command in January 2014. At U.S. Army South, the command provides its OCS issues through U.S. Southern Command's after-action review process,

³²See generally Army Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures 4-10 (Field Manual 3-100.21), *Operational Contract Support Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* (June 20, 2011).

but does not enter them into the lessons-learned system of record. However, other Army component commands such as U.S. Army Europe and U.S. Army Pacific have not collected OCS issues of their own. For example, U.S. Army Europe relies on the 409th Contracting Support Brigade to gather OCS issues, but these lessons have been primarily contracting-related.³³ As discussed later in the report, Army service component commands are collecting OCS issues to varying degrees because of a lack of awareness of OCS roles and responsibilities.

In contrast to the Army, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force—and their component commands—are generally not collecting OCS issues. For example, officials from the Navy and all the component commands we interviewed stated that they are not collecting OCS issues or are doing so to a limited degree. Furthermore, the Marine Corps does not systematically collect OCS issues. For example, at Marine Corps headquarters, the official responsible for OCS told us that the Marine Corps does not systematically collect OCS issues, but that sometimes he receives e-mails with OCS issues that he tries to resolve based on experiences he gathered while deployed in Afghanistan. Additionally, three of the six Marine Corps component commands, including Marine Corps Forces Central Command, have identified some OCS-related issues from exercises like Eager Lion in Jordan.³⁴ Officials at three of the six Air Force component commands we interviewed provided us with examples of contracting issues; however, according to officials, few if any noncontracting OCS issues had been collected.

According to DOD officials, those military services and their component commands that are generally not collecting OCS issues, or are doing so to varying degrees, are doing so because they lack an awareness of OCS issues. For example, officials from the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Contracting) told us that their office was assigned responsibility for OCS even though contracting is just a small

³³Contracting Support Brigades serve as the Army's primary theater support contracting headquarters. Brigade commanders also serve as the primary OCS planners and advisers to the Army Service Component Command.

³⁴Exercise Eager Lion is a multilateral exercise held annually since 2011 where coalition forces conduct a live-fire, counterattack operation at a range near Jebel Petra, Jordan. In 2014, coalition forces included ground forces from the U.S. Marine Corps, Jordanian Armed Forces, and the United Kingdom and aviation units from the Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of Turkey, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United States.

part of OCS. According to these officials, this decision was made because of a lack of awareness of OCS issues. Furthermore, U.S. Army South officials noted that part of the challenge of collecting OCS issues from exercises comes from a lack of understanding of OCS.

In June 2014, a DOD task force on contractor logistics in support of contingency operations found that strategic leadership across the department did not recognize OCS as a critical component of combat readiness.³⁵ One reason for the general lack of awareness of OCS issues stems from not having DOD-level guidance that establishes military service and component command roles and responsibilities regarding collection of OCS issues. While existing lessons-learned guidance—like Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E—identifies the importance of enhancing capabilities by collecting issues in broad terms, it does not list any specific capabilities such as OCS. Additionally, while DOD has issued guidance through part 158 of Title 32 of the Code of Federal Regulations and DOD Instruction 3020.41, which identify the roles and responsibilities of various OCS stakeholders—including lessons-learned responsibilities in the case of JCASO and the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy—they do not clearly identify roles and responsibilities for the military services and service component commands to collect OCS issues.³⁶ Furthermore, according to Joint Publication 4-10, the military departments, among other things, are responsible for integrating OCS into training, exercise, and lessons-learned programs; however, the publication does not specifically identify collection of OCS issues in its discussion of military service or service component command roles and responsibilities, as it did in its previous

³⁵Defense Science Board, Task Force on Contractor Logistics in Support of Contingency Operations (Washington, D.C.: June 2014).

³⁶The Secretaries of the military departments are to incorporate the guidance into applicable policy, doctrine, programming, training, and operations. See 32 C.F.R. § 158.5(k); DODI 3020.41, encl. 4, para. 11 (Dec. 20, 2011). Additionally, JCASO is tasked with collecting joint operations-focused OCS lessons learned and best practices in cooperation with the military services and other DOD components. See § 158.5(d)(3); DODI 3020.41, encl. 4, para. 4.c (Dec. 20, 2011). However, the guidance contains no specific requirement for the military services to engage directly in the collection of OCS-related lessons learned.

version.³⁷ According to Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, a good internal-control environment requires that the agency's organizational structure clearly define key areas of authority and responsibility and establish appropriate lines of reporting.³⁸ Until DOD revises its existing guidance to specifically establish and detail the roles and responsibilities of the services in collecting OCS issues, it will lack reasonable assurance that the services and their component commands recognize the importance of OCS.

Additionally, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force do not have service-specific OCS guidance that establishes and outlines their roles and responsibilities for the collection of OCS issues, which according to officials from these services contributes to the general lack of OCS awareness. As previously discussed, in addition to the JLLP, the services also have established service-specific lessons-learned programs and processes in support of the JLLP. However, according to officials from Air Force and Marine Corps component commands in Europe and Africa, the lack of service-specific guidance on OCS affects the commands' understanding of OCS roles and responsibilities, to include their collection of OCS issues as part of lessons-learned processes.

In February 2013, based on our finding that the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force lacked comprehensive OCS guidance, we recommended that they develop guidance, which would include the requirement to plan for OCS.³⁹ DOD concurred with our recommendation and has tasked the military services with issuing OCS guidance by the second quarter of fiscal year 2015.⁴⁰ The Army developed OCS guidance in 2010 and 2011. Additionally, the Marine Corps has developed draft OCS guidance that is

³⁷ See Joint Pub. 4-10, at II-8 (July 16, 2014). The prior version of Joint Publication 4-10 specifically identified the collection and distribution of OCS lessons learned among the responsibilities of the military departments and service component commands. See Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub. 4-10, *Operational Contract Support* at II-8, II-11 (Oct. 17, 2008).

³⁸ [GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#).

³⁹ [GAO-13-212](#).

⁴⁰ Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Program Support, *Department of Defense Operational Contract Support Action Plan FY 2014–2017* (Apr. 24, 2014). The DOD OCS Action Plan details more than 170 actions needed through 2017 to optimize the capability that OCS provides the Joint Force Commander. According to DOD, the plan ensures that the department aligns with legislation and strategic guidance and shapes OCS to be a Joint Force 2020 enabling capability.

in the review process and is expected to be issued in the spring 2015. According to Navy officials, the Navy expects to issue its OCS guidance by the first quarter of fiscal year 2016. However, Air Force officials have not indicated whether the Air Force will meet DOD's deadline as it continues to work to identify a lead to integrate and synchronize OCS issues. While we continue to believe that comprehensive service-wide guidance for these services is needed to further the integration of OCS into all of the services' planning, our prior recommendation did not address the issue of the services' roles and responsibilities for the collection of OCS issues as part of a lessons-learned process. Furthermore, according to DOD officials, it is unclear whether future OCS service-wide guidance from the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force will include roles and responsibilities for the collection of OCS issues. By not including the services' roles and responsibilities to collect OCS issues in comprehensive service-specific guidance, the services and the service component commands may not fully understand the importance of their roles in collecting OCS issues as part of their specific service's lessons-learned processes. As a result, commanders may be unable to build on efficiencies that their services have identified by collecting OCS issues and may be unable to adequately plan for the use of contractor support.

According to DOD officials, another reason that the military services and their component commands lack awareness of OCS and therefore the importance of collecting OCS issues is that senior service members—that is, commanders and senior leaders—do not have an OCS training requirement. According to DOD's Joint Concept for OCS, developing a skilled cadre of multidisciplinary military and civilian personnel with specialized OCS training and experience is one part of a holistic solution required to achieve a cultural change to integrate OCS throughout institutional and operational processes.⁴¹ However, according to senior service officials there is a lack of awareness of OCS at the leadership level within their services or component commands, which can be attributed to inadequate OCS training. According to these officials, OCS training can help improve commanders' and senior leaders' awareness of OCS issues. For example, service members who attended the Joint Staff's Joint OCS Planning and Execution Course generally praised it, noting that prior to attending the course they had a limited understanding

⁴¹Department of Defense, Operational Contract Support Joint Concept.

of OCS issues.⁴² However, while the Joint Staff offers the Joint OCS Planning and Execution Course as an opportunity to educate senior service members from the geographic combatant commands, military services, and service component command on OCS, according to senior Joint Staff officials, the course attendance of senior service members outside of the logistics functional area has been limited. According to a senior Joint Staff official, the initial approach for the Joint OCS Planning and Execution Course was to reach a broad audience as well as to provide OCS training to those that needed it the most. However, the official added that DOD needs to find a more-permanent training solution for OCS. The department also offers several online courses about OCS, but they are also electives, and none of the services has an OCS training requirement to take any of these existing courses. Several officials we interviewed from across the services cited the need for OCS training to improve awareness of OCS throughout their services. Additionally, senior officials from the Joint Staff and Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Program Support) stated that an OCS training requirement would help the services address their lack of awareness of OCS issues. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 recently added OCS to the list of subject matter to be covered by joint professional military education, which consists of the instruction and examination of officers in an environment designed to promote a theoretical and practical in-depth understanding of joint matters and, specifically, the subject matter covered.⁴³ Without an OCS training requirement, commanders and senior leaders at the military services and component commands may not be fully aware of OCS and its importance to the success of the warfighting mission. Furthermore, without this awareness of OCS's importance, senior service members may not properly prioritize the collection of OCS issues.

⁴²The Joint OCS Planning and Execution Course is an optional course designed to develop skills and provide knowledge for OCS staff to support planning and execution across the range of military operations. The desired students for this course are senior service members—commissioned officers and senior noncommissioned officers—and government civilians or contractors that are, or will be, assigned to a staff responsible for OCS planning support, execution, and oversight.

⁴³See 10 U.S.C. § 2151(a)(6), *added by* Pub. L. No. 112-239, § 845(c) (2013).

DOD Has Made Progress Integrating Some OCS Lessons Learned, but Lacks a Focal Point for Integrating OCS Issues from the JLLP

DOD Has Made Progress Integrating Some OCS Changes across the Department, Largely as a Result of Sources outside the JLLP

DOD has made progress integrating some changes resulting from lessons learned in OCS in doctrine, policy, and training, but these have largely come as a result of OCS issues raised outside of the JLLP. For example, in July 2014, DOD published a new version of Joint Publication 4-10, Operational Contract Support, that provides updated doctrine for the planning, conducting, and managing of OCS in joint operations.⁴⁴ It also provides guidance on matters such as OCS organization command and control. For example, the new version of Joint Publication 4-10 recommends the establishment of a permanent OCS integration cell at each geographic combatant command to perform contract-support integration and to provide oversight of any subordinate joint force command contract-integration cell when formed.⁴⁵ The development of this concept, according to Joint Publication 4-10, was a direct outgrowth from experiences in Afghanistan. DOD has also made progress in integrating changes in OCS through its revision of DOD Instruction 3020.41 and issuance of corresponding regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations.⁴⁶ The instruction and regulations establish policy, assign responsibilities, and provide procedures for OCS, including OCS

⁴⁴Joint Pub. 4-10 (July 16, 2014).

⁴⁵The Operational Contract Support Integration Cell, according to Joint Publication 4-10, is the key organizational element to effective and efficient OCS planning and integration. The primary task of the cell at both the geographic combatant command and subordinate joint force commander level is to lead the OCS planning and execution oversight effort across the joint force. This OCS-focused cell also serves as the primary collector and consolidator for major OCS-related information from various sources. *Id.* app. D.

⁴⁶DODI 3020.41 (Dec. 20, 2011); 32 C.F.R. pt. 158. According to DOD officials, the instruction is currently being revised and is expected to be reissued in 2016.

program management, contract-support integration, and integration of defense contractor personnel into contingency operations outside the United States. According to DOD documentation, initial lessons from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom provided impetus for developing a DOD policy for managing contractor personnel in support of contingency operations.

Additionally, the Joint Staff (J-4) developed a 10-day Joint OCS Planning and Execution Course for officers with support from Joint Staff (J-7), the Army's Acquisition, Logistics, Technology and Integration Office, and the Defense Acquisition University. According to DOD officials, the course was developed to fill the training gap in joint OCS planning and execution of OCS planners at the geographic combatant commands, sub-joint force command and service-component levels to plan and execute OCS across the range of military operations. The joint course, which is targeted at officers, senior noncommissioned officers, and government civilians focuses primarily on operational-level OCS staff responsibilities and tasks during military operations. Moreover, based on information from a Reverse Collection and Analysis Team, the Army identified that it lacked personnel that could provide primarily tactical-level OCS capabilities for units. In response, the Army established an additional skill identifier for OCS and developed an OCS course to train and prepare designated soldiers on how to prepare acquisition-ready requirements and manage a unit's overall contract-support responsibilities.

Sources of information outside of the JLLP have generally proved more significant in shaping changes in OCS. For example, according to a December 2013 DOD report on OCS Lessons Learned, the Secretary of the Army-directed Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations (otherwise known as the Gansler Commission), the Commission on Wartime Contracting, and various GAO reports have proved more relevant than DOD's lessons-learned program in effecting changes in doctrine, policy, training, and education among other areas.⁴⁷ Further, according to the DOD report, legislation and congressional focus and oversight provided additional urgency and visibility to OCS lessons learned, garnering the attention and focus of senior DOD leaders to institute improvements. For example,

⁴⁷ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, *Report on Contingency Contracting and Operational Contract Support Lessons Learned* (Dec. 20, 2013).

according to the department's report on OCS lessons learned, the Joint OCS Planning and Execution Course addresses a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008.⁴⁸ DOD also stated in the report that many of the OCS lessons learned identified from the JLLP are too tactically focused to help shape needed changes.⁴⁹

DOD Lacks a Focal Point for Integrating OCS Issues from the JLLP

The extent to which DOD can integrate OCS issues from the JLLP is limited because the department does not have a focal point for OCS lessons learned. As noted by DOD's OCS Joint Concept, there are multiple organizations across the department that are working on separate, and sometimes disjointed, OCS lessons-learned efforts.⁵⁰ Without a lead for lessons learned, as stated in the document, the department will continue to develop OCS capabilities in a haphazard and inefficient manner. According to the Center for Army Lessons Learned handbook, which serves as a guide for establishing a lessons-learned capability, the successful resolution and integration of lessons learned requires executive-level support or involvement.⁵¹ If unit commanders have the capability to correct an issue internally, according to the handbook, they should do that. However, according to the handbook, there will be issues that rise to the next level of attention that an organization is unable to correct internally. Further, the Center for Army Lessons Learned handbook emphasizes that without senior-level leadership involvement, with the authority to task agencies to work issues and reallocate resources, the lessons-learned process will fail. Moreover, according to Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, a good internal-control environment requires that the agency's

⁴⁸According to DOD's report on OCS lessons learned, the course directly addresses section 849 of that act. Section 849 established a requirement for joint policy to provide for training of military personnel outside the acquisition workforce who are expected to have acquisition responsibilities, including oversight duties associated with contracts or contractors, during combat operations, postconflict operations, and contingency operations. See Pub. L. No. 110-181, § 849(a) (2008) (amending 10 U.S.C. § 2333).

⁴⁹Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, *Report on Contingency Contracting and Operational Contract Support Lessons Learned* (Dec. 20, 2013).

⁵⁰DOD, Operational Contract Support Joint Concept.

⁵¹Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Establishing a Lessons Learned Program: Observations, Insights, and Lessons* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: June 2011).

organizational structure clearly define key areas of authority and responsibility and establish appropriate lines of reporting.⁵²

In December 2006, we found that there was no organization within DOD responsible for developing procedures to systematically collect and share its institutional knowledge regarding the use of contractors to support deployed forces.⁵³ We therefore recommended that DOD appoint a focal point to, among other things, lead and coordinate the development of a department-wide lessons-learned program to capture the experiences of units deployed to locations with OCS. DOD concurred with our recommendation, and stated that DOD would develop and implement a systematic strategy for capturing, retaining, and applying lessons learned on the use of contractor support to deployed forces. Additionally, DOD subsequently stated in response to this recommendation that JCASO would be deemed responsible for collecting OCS lessons learned. While the department, as of December 2014, has not developed a systematic strategy for capturing, retaining, and applying OCS lessons learned, it has assigned JCASO responsibility for collecting joint operations–focused OCS lessons learned and best practices from contingency operations and exercises in order to inform OCS policy and recommend solutions in doctrine and training, among other areas, in cooperation with the services and other DOD components.⁵⁴ However, according to JCASO and other senior DOD officials, JCASO does not serve as a focal point for integrating OCS issues from the JLLP, but rather informs policy and recommends solutions on joint OCS issues. JCASO was tasked in the DOD OCS Action Plan to provide an assessment of OCS lessons learned to the OCS Functional Capabilities Integration Board and to lead efforts to identify enterprise-wide solutions to incorporate them, such as in doctrine, policy, and procedures. However, according to officials, the assessment will be completed by the end of 2016.

In addition, the department is currently leading a working group to conduct an assessment of JCASO’s mission, roles and responsibilities to ensure the department is effectively and efficiently leveraging JCASO to determine whether it is properly organized, staffed, and resourced to

⁵²[GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#).

⁵³[GAO-07-145](#).

⁵⁴32 C.F.R. § 158.5(d)(3); DODI 3020.41, encl. 4, para. 4.c (Dec. 20, 2011).

meet emerging OCS requirements. JCASO's responsibilities regarding lessons learned will be included in this assessment. According to senior DOD officials, they expect to complete this review by the end of fiscal year 2015.

In the past few years, there has been significant support within the department for an OCS joint proponent with lessons-learned responsibilities. Joint Publication 1-02 defines a joint proponent as a service, combatant command, or Joint Staff directorate assigned coordinating authority to lead the collaborative development and integration of joint capability with specific responsibilities designated by the Secretary of Defense.⁵⁵ The October 2013 OCS Joint Concept outlined a plan to designate a proponent that would, among things, manage the OCS lessons-learned process to ensure the latest lessons and best practices from the field are recorded to ensure that capability requirements and content across DOD's institutional processes are consistent.⁵⁶ According to the plan, this proponent would establish and maintain the OCS joint lessons-learned process to collect, catalog, and validate observations, insights, and lessons from operations and exercises. Furthermore, the services, geographic combatant commands, and the combat service agencies would work collaboratively with the proponent to ensure issues and lessons learned are entered into the process. Additionally, a June 2014 report from the Defense Science Board also recommended that the department establish a 3-star-equivalent, director-level proponent that would coordinate OCS efforts across the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the military departments, and the defense agencies, and support efforts to resource critical OCS-related requirements across these organizations.⁵⁷ The report recommended that this proponent oversee the creation of a visible and transparent knowledge-management system for OCS that links planning, requirements, contracting, and audit functions.

Several officials we spoke with expressed support for an OCS joint proponent with lessons-learned responsibilities. As Joint Staff (J-7)

⁵⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub. 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Nov. 8, 2010) (as amended through Dec. 15, 2014).

⁵⁶ DOD, Operational Contract Support Joint Concept.

⁵⁷ Defense Science Board, Task Force on Contractor Logistics in Support of Contingency Operations.

officials explained, having a joint proponent is essential to integrating issues in cross-capabilities such as OCS because it allows OCS stakeholders, for example, to better advocate for additional resources during high-level DOD processes such as the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System.⁵⁸ Additionally, Joint Staff (J-4) officials noted that the OCS lessons-learned process has many owners and lacks a singular point of focus. They added that OCS in general can become compartmentalized among the defense agencies, military services, and combatant commands. However, according to officials, since the community is relatively small currently, they prefer to talk and share relevant information informally rather than through the JLLP process. Army lessons-learned officials stated that the OCS lessons-learned community is disjointed and lacks synchronization, and stated that a joint proponent with lessons-learned responsibilities is the next logical step in institutionalizing OCS in the department. However, Army officials cautioned that DOD should be careful in selecting a joint proponent, as it must be properly situated in the department and staffed with personnel with diverse and relevant expertise.

DOD has undertaken initial efforts to identify and assign an OCS joint proponent that will include lessons-learned responsibilities. According to officials, as of December 2014, the Joint Staff (J-4) is leading a feasibility assessment with the Functional Capabilities Integration Board for an OCS Joint Proponent. The assessment team plans to issue its findings to the Functional Capabilities Integration Board in February 2015. According to officials, they have agreed to recommend a single OCS joint proponent to handle multiple areas such as training, personnel, materiel, as well as lessons learned. However, according to officials, they have not determined specific roles and responsibilities, such as whether the joint proponent would be responsible for providing formal oversight for integrating OCS issues from the JLLP. As DOD develops its concept for an OCS joint proponent, by establishing such roles and responsibilities, DOD could help ensure that it has a systematic strategy for capturing, retaining, and applying lessons learned on the use of OCS, to include integrating issues from the JLLP. Including such roles and responsibilities in the concept for the OCS joint proponent will help better position DOD to

⁵⁸The Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System process is a collaborative effort that uses joint concepts and integrated architectures to identify prioritized capability gaps and integrated doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities solutions to resolve those gaps.

integrate all OCS issues identified from the JLLP, thereby addressing any key OCS gaps and shortfalls in its efforts.

DOD Organizations Inconsistently Use JLLIS to Share OCS Issues and Lessons Learned Due to Challenges with the System's Limited Functionality

DOD Organizations That Collect and Resolve OCS Issues and Lessons Learned Use JLLIS to Varying Degrees

The geographic combatant commands and Army use JLLIS to varying degrees to share OCS lessons learned department-wide. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E states that the Joint Staff Joint Directorates and combatant commands shall share joint issues in the JLLP, and the military services shall share information across the joint force in support of the JLLP.⁵⁹ According to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, JLLIS is the department's system of record for the JLLP, the primary means of dissemination of lessons learned, and facilitates the collection, tracking, management, sharing, collaborative resolution, and dissemination of lessons learned to improve the development and readiness of the joint force.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government indicate that all transactions and other significant events should be clearly documented and the documentation readily available.⁶¹

We found that all of the geographic combatant commands enter OCS issues into JLLIS, but do not use the system to track the progress of collection and resolution efforts. For example, U.S. Pacific Command

⁵⁹See CJCSI 3150.25E, encl. C, paras. 7-9 (Apr. 20, 2012).

⁶⁰See CJCSI 3150.25E, encl. A, paras. 3, 4.e (Apr. 20, 2012).

⁶¹[GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#).

officials entered issues from Operation Tomodachi into JLLIS, such as the need for a Joint Theater Support Contracting Command.⁶² In August 2012, U.S. Pacific Command officials used this issue and others to inform the development of U.S. Pacific Command Instruction 0601.7 on OCS, which included planning considerations and procedures for establishing a Joint Theater Support Contracting Command, and a month later, cohosted a rehearsal-of-concept drill with the Joint Staff (J-4). The objectives of the rehearsal-of-concept drill included testing and adjusting tactics, techniques, and procedures developed by the Joint Staff (J-4) and the methodology for establishing and manning a Joint Theater Support Contracting Command. However, U.S. Pacific Command officials did not use the system to track these resolution activities. As a result, U.S. Pacific Command's resolution involving the development and issuance of U.S. Pacific Command Instruction 0601.7 was neither entered into JLLIS nor shared through JLLIS so that other geographic combatant commands encountering similar challenges could view it. Similarly, U.S. Southern Command entered issues collected from exercises and operations into JLLIS, but used processes outside of JLLIS to resolve OCS issues. As the JLLP's system of record, JLLIS facilitates the collaborative resolution of lessons learned to improve the development and readiness of the joint force. For instance, the lessons-learned process provides DOD organizations with a joint lesson memorandum, a tool that may be used by organizations' leadership to inform the Joint Staff of lessons requiring their analysis and resolution. However, U.S. Southern Command officials stated that they have used means such as the Program Budget Review process, or even phone calls to communicate OCS issues and shortfalls to the Joint Staff, but that no issues have been forwarded to the Joint Staff through the formal issue-resolution process.

The geographic combatant commands also enter OCS issues into JLLIS at different rates. According to CJCS Instruction 3150.25E, combatant commands are to collect and share key, overarching, and crosscutting issues using JLLIS no later than 45 days after the end of an exercise, in order to facilitate the timely sharing of issues from combatant-command

⁶²According to Joint Publication 4-10, the primary task of the Joint Theater Support Contracting Command is to effectively and efficiently synchronize all theater support contracting under a single control and command structure and provide responsive contracting support to the joint force command. Joint Pub. 4-10, at E-7 (July 16, 2014).

exercises.⁶³ However, according to DOD officials, the rate at which geographic commands enter OCS issues into JLLIS varies. For instance, U.S. European Command officials stated that they use JLLIS as a repository to store OCS issues until they can be reviewed for possible resolution efforts. Other commands enter OCS issues into JLLIS after a resolution has been validated. Officials from U.S. Northern Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Africa Command stated that they have internal processes for collecting and resolving OCS issues prior to submission into JLLIS. According to an official with U.S. European Command, this process could take a year or more.

On the other hand, the Army developed an OCS concept to synchronize efforts on OCS lessons learned that included utilizing the Army Lessons Learned Information System, the Army's portal to JLLIS to share issues and lessons learned. The Army's Acquisition, Logistics, Technology, and Integration Office, which leads the development and integration of OCS across the Army and the Army's OCS lessons learned program, recognized that OCS issues collected from after-action reports, reverse collection and analysis action teams, and the Center for Army Lessons Learned resided in multiple repositories and were not shared throughout the Army. As a result, the Army's Acquisition, Logistics and Technology-Integration Office developed and currently administers an OCS lessons-learned portal on the Army Lessons Learned Information System to create a primary system to input OCS issues and ensure that OCS lessons learned are shared within the system. However, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force are not generally collecting OCS issues, and therefore, not generally sharing OCS issues in JLLIS. For example, while Air Force officials provided us with examples of contracting issues they collected, they reported that few, if any, noncontracting OCS issues had been collected.

⁶³ According to the instruction, observations may be entered directly into JLLIS or exported into JLLIS from another system, the Joint Training Information Management System. See CJSCI 3150.25E, encl. B, app. A, para. 4.b (Apr. 20, 2012).

DOD Organizations Generally Rely on Forums and Systems outside of JLLIS to Share OCS Issues and Lessons Learned

Those DOD organizations that collect and resolve OCS issues and lessons learned generally rely on forums and systems outside of DOD's lessons-learned program to share OCS issues and lessons learned. We found that five of the six geographic combatant commands rely on OCS-related boards and working groups to share OCS lessons learned within their geographic combatant commands and respective service component commands. For example, officials from U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Northern Command reported that they share OCS lessons learned during meetings of their respective OCS Working Groups and Commanders Logistics Procurement Support Boards; however, U.S. Northern Command officials clarified that meeting minutes were the only way to record lessons learned discussed during their meetings of the Commanders Logistics Procurement Support Board. U.S. Central Command officials stated that they rely exclusively on personal relationships, e-mails, and telephone calls to share OCS lessons learned. However, by using forums and methods outside of JLLIS to share OCS issues and lessons learned, such as meeting minutes and telephone calls, DOD runs the risk of not being able to systematically track, resolve, and share OCS issues department-wide, which could negatively affect joint force development and readiness.

The geographic combatant commands and service component commands also store and share OCS lessons learned on local SharePoint portals, which limit information sharing to the other geographic combatant commands and service component commands.⁶⁴ For example, U.S. European Command stores and shares OCS issues and lessons learned on its classified SharePoint portal. In another instance, U.S. Pacific Air Forces does not input any lessons learned into JLLIS; instead, it houses lessons learned on a classified community of practice on U.S. Pacific Air Forces' SharePoint portal, which as of July 2014, was not active or available to users. Two out of six Army service component commands—U.S. Army Europe and U.S. Army Pacific—also store lessons learned on their local SharePoint portals. Officials with U.S. Army Europe reported that they occasionally share issues and lessons learned with the European Contracting Coordination Board.⁶⁵ Meanwhile,

⁶⁴SharePoint is a Microsoft product that allows users to store, organize, share, and access information via a web browser.

⁶⁵According to DOD documentation, the European Contracting Coordination Board was established to synchronize contracting support, leverage organizational expertise, and resolve common issues across the European theater.

officials with U.S. Army Pacific stated that sharing issues and lessons learned throughout U.S. Pacific Command or other geographic combatant commands can prove difficult since they store their lessons on local SharePoint portals, which exist behind firewalls.

JLLIS's Functionality as an Information-Sharing Mechanism Is Limited

DOD is generally not sharing OCS lessons learned in JLLIS because the system is not functional for users searching OCS issues. JLLIS's limited functionality for OCS issues is due to (1) its inadequate search features, (2) not having an OCS label in JLLIS, and (3) the lack of a central location for sharing information about OCS issues and lessons learned within JLLIS. According to the Joint Staff (J-7), which serves as the office of primary responsibility for JLLIS, the system's search features pose significant challenges to retrieving information for civilian and military users without expertise or experience with JLLIS. Officials with the Joint Staff (J-7) stated that users who regularly utilize the system, such as doctrine writers, know how to mine the system for pertinent information, but JLLIS's search features can be difficult to use for infrequent users of the system. Furthermore, officials at three of the six commands—U.S. Africa Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Southern Command—reported that it is difficult to research OCS issues and lessons learned due to JLLIS's poor search functionality.

In addition to JLLIS's limited search features, JLLIS does not have a label for OCS issues and lessons learned. When users enter issues and lessons learned into JLLIS, the system allows users to label information as pertaining to a certain topic, which improves their ability to later search for issues and lessons learned related to that topic. For example, JLLIS has a label for Sustainment issues and lessons learned. JLLIS users researching issues and lessons learned on Sustainment can search for that label, and the system will return information related to Sustainment. However, there is no label for OCS in JLLIS. Officials at three of the six commands—U.S. Africa Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Southern Command—reported that it is difficult to research OCS issues and lessons learned because JLLIS does not have a label for OCS. In the absence of an OCS label, officials at U.S. Southern Command noted that they use related functional areas and joint mission-essential tasks to label OCS issues and lessons learned to improve their ability to find relevant information; however, this process does not ensure that those issues and lessons learned will be properly categorized as OCS. Joint Staff (J-4) officials stated that there is little chance that OCS issues or lessons learned in JLLIS will be useful or communicated to a broader OCS audience if they are labeled incorrectly or do not specifically refer to OCS.

In July 2014, we visited the Joint Staff (J-7) for a demonstration of JLLIS. During that meeting, JLLIS allowed users viewing information to search only by a single word.⁶⁶ For example, when tested during the demonstration, “operational contract support” was an invalid search term because it contained a phrase with multiple words. On the other hand, “OCS” was a valid search term because it contained only a single word. When tested during the demonstration, the search for “OCS” yielded 2,191 results. However, these results included information regarding “officer candidate school” and “joint operation command systems”—other topics that also include the letters OCS. Without an OCS label, we were unable to narrow the search results to information pertaining only to OCS.

In addition to the limited search features and the lack of an OCS label, JLLIS also lacks a central location for OCS issues and lessons learned. JLLIS offers a community of practice functionality. DOD documentation identifies the community of practice as a webpage that provides a place for an organization to share and collaborate on issue resolution and to post items of interest to a particular internal group.⁶⁷ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E indicates that, through the joint community of practice, JLLIS provides the JLLP the ability to gather information quickly and process larger quantities of information in a single location, allowing dissemination of relevant data to a wider audience. Through group interaction, community-of-practice members can create a knowledge base from which to share information across the joint lessons learned community.⁶⁸ Various organizations, such as the Joint Staff (J-4) and U.S. Central Command have established OCS communities of practice on their individual web pages in JLLIS, which consist of limited briefings, interviews, and two lessons-learned reports. U.S. Pacific Command also has a classified OCS community of Practice in JLLIS. However, there is no designated OCS community of practice on JLLIS. As a result, OCS issues and lessons learned reside in multiple

⁶⁶The user during this demonstration had permissions that allowed the user to view all published, active, validated, or closed data in JLLIS. JLLIS allows users to search for observations or a keyword filter. The keyword filter returns observations, issues, documents, communities of practice, port visits, binders, after-action reports, and associated files.

⁶⁷Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, *Report on Contingency Contracting and Operational Contract Support Lessons Learned* (Dec. 20, 2013), p. 19.

⁶⁸See CJCSI 3150.25E, encl. B, app. A, para. 5.c (Apr. 20, 2012).

repositories, which limits the sharing of OCS information department-wide.

According to officials with the Joint Staff (J-7), they have received feedback from several JLLIS users reporting that the search features are not user friendly. The officials stated that JLLIS's search features can make the system difficult for the average user to utilize. As a result, they informed us that they have made improving the search features in JLLIS a priority. During our visits in July 2014, the Joint Staff (J-7) was in the process of acquiring software to upgrade the search feature in JLLIS, and according to the Joint Staff (J-7), as of November 2014 the upgrade had been approved and funded. Joint Staff (J-7) officials stated that JLLIS will be enhanced with the integration of IBM Content Analytics software. The software package will provide enhanced search capability that includes keyword and phrase search features, search suggestions, and spelling correction. The estimated timeline for full implementation of the upgrade within JLLIS ends in approximately May 2015. However, the software upgrade will not address the lack of an OCS label or designated OCS community of practice. As a result, the software upgrade will have a limited effect on improving JLLIS's functionality for searching and sharing OCS issues and lessons learned.

According to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, JLLIS is the JLLP's system of record and facilitates the collection, tracking, management, sharing, collaborative resolution, and dissemination of lessons learned to improve the development and readiness of the joint force.⁶⁹ Due to JLLIS's limited functionality for searching OCS issues and lessons learned, DOD organizations rely instead on forums and systems outside of JLLIS to share OCS issues and lessons learned. By sharing OCS issues and lessons learned using limited distribution channels like e-mails, specific forums, or SharePoint portals, OCS information may not be clearly documented in a single location and readily available to a wider audience for examination, consistent with standards for internal control in the federal government. As a result, until DOD improves the functionality of JLLIS it will be difficult for users to search for OCS issues, and DOD runs the risk of working on duplicative efforts and repeating past mistakes. For example, officials from one geographic combatant command we interviewed reported

⁶⁹ See CJCSI 3150.25E, encl. A, para. 3 (Apr. 20, 2012).

having difficulty developing a policy for Synchronized Predeployment and Operational Tracker in their area of responsibility. However, other geographic combatant commands, such as U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command, have already developed and implemented independent policies for this system throughout their area of responsibility. According to the JLLP, the challenges associated with the policy development should have been entered in JLLIS so other geographic combatant commands would not encounter the same difficulties. As we reported in 2006 and later testified in 2008, when OCS lessons learned are not systematically shared, DOD runs the risk of being unable to build on the efficiencies and effectiveness others have developed during past operations that involved OCS.⁷⁰

Conclusions

DOD has spent billions of dollars on contract support since 2002, and while it has taken some positive steps in recent years to institutionalize OCS, the department has experienced challenges in collecting, integrating, and sharing OCS issues and lessons learned. The geographic combatant commands continue to improve efforts to collect OCS issues from operations and exercises, but the military services other than the Army are not generally collecting OCS issues nor is there a requirement for training on OCS lessons learned issues. Actions to improve and develop specific guidance as well as require OCS training for commanders and senior leaders could improve awareness of OCS capabilities and the importance of collecting OCS issues for mission success. Additionally, DOD has made progress integrating some OCS issues, largely as a result of sources outside of the JLLP. With multiple organizations across the department working on separate and sometimes disjointed lessons-learned efforts, the department's ability to integrate issues from the JLLP remains limited. By not including specific roles and responsibilities related to lessons learned in its concept for the OCS joint proponent, DOD may not be positioned to integrate all OCS issues identified from the JLLP, and may be unable to address any key OCS gaps and shortfalls in its efforts. Further, we found that while JLLIS remains the department's JLLP system of record, DOD organizations generally rely on systems outside of JLLIS to collect, resolve, and share OCS issues and lessons learned. Until DOD improves the functionality of

⁷⁰ [GAO-07-145](#) and GAO, *Defense Management: DOD Needs to Reexamine Its Extensive Reliance on Contractors and Continue to Improve Management and Oversight*, [GAO-08-572T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 11, 2008).

JLLIS, it will be difficult for users to search for OCS issues, and DOD runs the risk of working on duplicative efforts and repeating past mistakes. In a resource-constrained environment, DOD will continue to depend on contractors to provide increased capacity, capabilities, and skills in the future. However, without more consistent and systematic OCS lessons learned efforts, the department lacks reasonable assurance that it has identified key gaps in OCS capabilities and that it will not repeat past mistakes in future contingencies.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We are recommending that the department take five actions to improve efforts to collect, integrate, and share OCS lessons learned.

To help improve collection of OCS issues by the military services and service component commands, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense revise existing DOD guidance, such as DOD Instruction 3020.41, to specifically detail the roles and responsibilities of the services in collecting OCS issues.

To specifically identify and improve awareness of OCS roles and responsibilities and to collect OCS issues at the military services and the service component commands, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the Navy and Air Force to include the services' roles and responsibilities to collect OCS issues in comprehensive service-specific guidance on how the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force should integrate OCS.

To help improve awareness of OCS roles and responsibilities and to collect OCS issues at the military services and the service component commands, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the military departments, in coordination with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to establish an OCS training requirement for commanders and senior leaders.

To help improve DOD's management of OCS lessons learned, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense ensure that, as the department develops a concept for an OCS joint proponent, it include specific roles and responsibilities for a focal point responsible for integrating OCS issues from the Joint Lessons Learned Program.

To help improve the functionality of JLLIS for sharing OCS lessons learned, we recommend that, as DOD upgrades JLLIS, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff direct the Joint Staff (J-7) and Joint Staff (J-4) to

implement an OCS label in JLLIS and designate a single community of practice for OCS in JLLIS.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In written comments on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with four of the five recommendations and partially concurred with one recommendation. DOD's comments are summarized below and reprinted in appendix III. DOD also provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.

DOD concurred with the first recommendation that the Secretary of Defense revise existing DOD guidance, such as DOD Instruction 3020.41, to specifically detail the roles and responsibilities of the services in collecting OCS issues. In its response, DOD stated that specific details regarding the roles and responsibilities of the services in collecting OCS issues will be incorporated in the revised Instruction. We believe that this action, if fully implemented, would meet the intent of the recommendation.

DOD concurred with the second recommendation that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the Navy and Air Force to include the services' roles and responsibilities to collect OCS issues in comprehensive service-specific guidance on how the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force should integrate OCS. Although DOD stated in its response that the services should take steps to include such guidance, it did not identify any actions DOD would take to direct the services to do so. We believe such direction from the Secretary of Defense to the services, as we recommended, is necessary to ensure roles and responsibilities for collecting OCS issues are adequately and consistently identified in each of the services' OCS guidance.

DOD concurred with the third recommendation that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the military departments, in coordination with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to establish an OCS training requirement for commanders and senior leaders. In its response, DOD stated that the services are developing OCS training requirements for commanders and senior leaders in coordination with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We believe that this action, if fully implemented, would meet the intent of the recommendation.

DOD partially concurred with the fourth recommendation that the Secretary of Defense ensure that, as the department develops a concept for an OCS joint proponent, it include specific roles and responsibilities for a focal point responsible for integrating OCS issues from the JLLP. In its


comments, DOD stated that efforts to review and evaluate potential courses of action to establish an OCS joint proponent are under way and upon completion, the department will determine the way ahead. We agree that this is a reasonable approach. However, as we noted in our report, DOD could help ensure that it has a systematic strategy for capturing, retaining, and applying OCS lessons learned by establishing specific OCS lessons-learned responsibilities for a future OCS joint proponent, such as whether it would be responsible for providing formal oversight for integrating OCS issues from the JLLP. Including such roles and responsibilities in the concept for the OCS joint proponent will help better position DOD to integrate all OCS issues identified from the JLLP, thereby addressing any key OCS gaps and shortfalls in its efforts.

DOD concurred with the fifth recommendation that, as DOD upgrades JLLIS, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff direct the Joint Staff (J-7) and Joint Staff (J-4) to implement an OCS label in JLLIS and designate a single community of practice for OCS in JLLIS. In its response, DOD stated that the Joint Staff is working to develop a single community of practice. However, DOD did not specifically address how it would implement an OCS label in JLLIS. As we noted in our report, establishing a specific OCS label in JLLIS would improve the search capabilities for OCS issues and better enable communication of lessons learned to a broader OCS audience. Accordingly, we believe that DOD also needs to establish such an OCS label in JLLIS to fully address the recommendation.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees. We are also sending copies to the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Secretaries of the military departments. The report is also available at no charge on GAO's website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-5431 or russellc@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page

of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix IV.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cary Russell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cary" and last name "Russell" clearly distinguishable.

Cary Russell
Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

List of Committees

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

We performed our work under the Comptroller General's authority to conduct evaluations at his own initiative, in light of congressional interest in the Department of Defense's (DOD) efforts to institutionalize lessons learned related to operational contract support (OCS).¹ This report examines the extent to which (1) the geographic combatant commands and the services collect OCS issues to develop lessons learned; (2) DOD has a focal point for integrating OCS issues from the Joint Lessons Learned Program (JLLP); and (3) DOD organizations use the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) to share OCS issues and lessons learned. To address these objectives, we excluded OCS issues and lessons learned from the acquisition community—for example, contracting officers. According to Joint Publication 4-10, the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy is responsible for developing and implementing a DOD-wide contingency contracting–related lessons-learned program and ensuring validated lessons from this program are disseminated and incorporated into relevant Defense Acquisition University instruction.²

To determine the extent to which the geographic combatant commands and the services collect OCS issues to develop lessons learned, we reviewed guidance to understand the roles and responsibilities of these DOD entities regarding the collection of OCS issues and compared them with the information we collected during our interviews to identify the extent to which the geographic combatant commands and the services collect OCS issues. Specifically, we reviewed the relevant provisions in part 158 of Title 32 of the Code of Federal Regulations and DOD Instruction 3020.41, which establish policy, assign responsibilities, and provide procedures for OCS, including OCS program management, contract support integration, and integration of defense contractor personnel into contingency operations outside the United States.³ We also reviewed Joint Publication 4-10, which provides joint doctrine for planning, executing, and managing OCS in all phases of joint operations.

¹See H.R. Rep. No. 112-479, at 187-88 (2012) (a HASC report discussing DOD's OCS lessons-learned efforts and directing DOD to undertake an effort to capture lessons learned related to DOD contract activities, such as OCS, among other matters).

²See Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub. 4-10, *Operational Contract Support* at II-3 (July 16, 2014).

³32 C.F.R. pt. 158; Department of Defense Instruction 3020.41, *Operational Contract Support* (OCS) (Dec. 20, 2011).

Additionally, we reviewed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, which establishes policy, guidance, and responsibilities for the JLLP, to understand the established lessons-learned process.⁴ Furthermore, to understand how OCS should be integrated into the geographic combatant commands' training systems and plans, we reviewed joint training guidance, such as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3500.01H and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Notice 3500.01.⁵ Additionally, we reviewed the Joint Concept for OCS, which is intended to guide OCS capability development for the Joint Force 2020. In addition to joint guidance, we reviewed military department and service guidance, such as Army Regulation 11-33, Air Force Instruction 90-1601, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3500.37C, and Marine Corps Order 3504.1, to identify any military department- or service-specific policies, guidance, and responsibilities for the collection of issues.⁶ We also interviewed OCS and lessons-learned officials from all six geographic combatant commands, all of the associated military service component commands, and the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marine Corps to discuss their roles and responsibilities regarding the collection of OCS issues. We visited all six geographic combatant commands to conduct our interviews with them.

To determine the extent to which DOD has a focal point for integrating OCS issues learned from the JLLP, we reviewed related GAO reports on OCS, as well as related reports issued by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, OCS Functional Capabilities Integration Board, and the Center for Army Lessons Learned. Furthermore, we reviewed the Joint Contingency

⁴Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, *Joint Lessons Learned Program* (Apr. 20, 2012).

⁵Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3500.01H, *Joint Training Policy for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Apr. 25, 2014); Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3500.01G, *Joint Training Policy and Guidance for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Mar. 15, 2012) (superseded by the 2014 reissuance); Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Notice 3500.01, *2014-2017 Chairman's Joint Training Guidance* (Oct. 10, 2013).

⁶Army Regulation 11-33, *Army Lessons Learned Program (ALLP)* (Oct. 17, 2006); Air Force Instruction 90-1601, *Air Force Lessons Learned Program* (Dec. 18, 2013); Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3500.37C, *Navy Lessons Learned System (NLLS)* (Feb. 16, 2001); Marine Corps Order 3504.1, *Marine Corps Lessons Learned Program (MCLLP) and the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL)* (July 31, 2006).

Acquisition Support Office's (JCASO) OCS issue collection documents—presentation and reports—to understand the scope of its efforts to integrate OCS lessons learned into doctrine, policy, training, and education. We compared guidance, such as relevant provisions in part 158 of Title 32 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, DOD Instruction 3020.41, Joint Publication 4-10, and charters for the OCS Functional Capabilities Integration Board, with DOD's process for the integration of OCS lessons learned. Additionally, we interviewed officials from the Joint Staff and JCASO, which participate in the process of integrating OCS lessons learned in doctrine, policy, training, and education and informing OCS policy and recommending solutions, respectively. We also interviewed officials specifically focused on integrating OCS department-wide, such as officials from the Operational Contract Support Functional Capabilities Integration Board, to obtain their perspective on the progress the department has made in integrating OCS. In addition to these officials, we interviewed officials from each of the services—Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps—to gain an understanding of how each service has integrated OCS lessons learned from the JLLP. We compared this information to federal internal-control standards that state a good internal-control environment requires that the agency's organizational structure clearly define key areas of authority and responsibility and establish appropriate lines of reporting.⁷

To determine the extent to which DOD organizations have used JLLIS to share OCS issues and lessons learned, we collected and analyzed documentation, such as guidance related to the dissemination of OCS issues and lessons learned. Specifically, we reviewed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3150.25E, which establishes policy, guidance, and responsibilities for the JLLP, to identify the roles and responsibilities of commanders to share OCS issues and lessons learned and identify the JLLP system of record for sharing those issues and lessons learned. Additionally, we participated in a demonstration of JLLIS led by the Joint Staff (J-7) to understand and observe JLLIS's function as an information-sharing system, specifically its search and cataloging capabilities. Due to the OCS responsibilities identified in DOD guidance, we also interviewed officials from the Joint Staff (J-4), geographic

⁷GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#) (Washington, D.C.: November 1999).

combatant commands, each of the services, and their respective service component commands to obtain their perspective on JLLIS for sharing OCS issues and lessons learned. To determine the extent to which DOD organizations have used JLLIS to share OCS issues and lessons learned, we interviewed officials from the aforementioned organizations to gain an understanding of how each organization shares OCS issues and lessons learned. We also compared this information to federal internal-control standards that indicate that all significant events should be clearly documented and the documentation readily available.⁸

We visited or contacted officials from the following DOD organizations during our review:

Department of Defense

- Defense Logistics Agency, Fort Belvoir, Virginia
 - Joint Contingency Acquisition Support Office, Fort Belvoir, Virginia
- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
 - Joint Staff J-4 (Logistics) Directorate, Washington, D.C.
 - Joint Staff J-7 (Joint Force Development) Directorate, Washington, D.C.
- Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
 - Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Program Support), Washington, D.C.
 - OCS Functional Capabilities Integration Board, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Africa Command, Stuttgart, Germany
- U.S. Central Command, Tampa, Florida
- U.S. European Command, Stuttgart, Germany
- U.S. Northern Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado
- U.S. Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii
- U.S. Southern Command, Doral, Florida

Department of the Army

- Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4 (Logistics), Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Army Acquisition, Logistics and Technology-Integration Office, Ft. Lee, Virginia
- U.S. Army Africa, Vicenza, Italy

⁸[GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1.](#)

- U.S. Army Central, Kuwait City, Kuwait
- U.S. Army Europe, Wiesbaden, Germany
- U.S. Army North, San Antonio, Texas
- U.S. Army Pacific, Fort Shafter, Hawaii
- U.S. Army South, Fort Sam Houston, Texas

Department of the Navy

- Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy–Acquisition and Procurement, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia
- U.S. Marine Corps Headquarters, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa Bay, Florida
- U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa, Stuttgart, Germany
- U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii
- U.S. Marine Corps Forces Northern Command, New Orleans, Louisiana
- U.S. Marine Corps Forces South, Doral, Florida
- U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, Bahrain
- U.S. Naval Forces Europe–Africa, Naples, Italy
- U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command, Naval Station Mayport, Florida
- U.S. Pacific Fleet, Makalapa, Hawaii

Department of the Air Force

- Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Acquisition), Directorate of Contracting, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Air Forces Air Combat Command Lessons Learned (A9L), Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Air Forces Central Command, Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina
- U.S. Air Forces Europe and Air Forces Africa, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
- U.S. Air Forces Northern (1st Air Force), Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida
- U.S. Air Forces Southern (12th Air Force), Tucson, Arizona
- U.S. Pacific Air Forces, Joint Base Pearl Harbor–Hickam, Hawaii

We conducted this performance audit from March 2014 to March 2015 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that

the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Department of Defense's Geographic Combatant Commands and Their Service Component Commands

Appendix II contains information presented in figure 1 in a noninteractive format.

Table 1: Department of Defense's (DOD) Geographic Combatant Commands and Their Service Component Commands

Geographic combatant command	Headquarters location
U.S. Africa Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headquarters, Stuttgart, Germany Army Africa, Vicenza, Italy U.S. Air Forces in Europe–Air Forces Africa, Ramstein, Germany Naval Forces Europe–Naval Forces Africa, Naples, Italy Marine Forces Africa, Stuttgart, Germany Special Operations Command Africa, Stuttgart, Germany
U.S. Central Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headquarters, Tampa, Florida Army Central, Sumter, South Carolina Air Forces Central Command, Sumter, South Carolina Naval Forces Central Command, Manama, Bahrain Marine Forces Central, Tampa, Florida Special Operations Command Central, Tampa, Florida
U.S. European Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headquarters, Stuttgart, Germany Army Europe, Heidelberg, Germany U.S. Air Forces in Europe–Air Forces Africa, Ramstein, Germany Naval Forces Europe–Naval Forces Africa, Naples, Italy Marine Forces Europe, Stuttgart, Germany Special Operations Command Europe, Stuttgart, Germany
U.S. Northern Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headquarters, Colorado Springs, Colorado Army North, San Antonio, Texas Air Forces North, Panama City, Florida Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia Marine Forces North, New Orleans, Louisiana
U.S. Pacific Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headquarters, Oahu, Hawaii Army Pacific, Oahu, Hawaii Pacific Air Forces, Oahu, Hawaii Navy Pacific Fleet, Oahu, Hawaii Marine Forces Pacific, Oahu, Hawaii Special Operations Command Pacific, Oahu, Hawaii Alaskan Command, Anchorage, Alaska U.S. Forces Japan, Honshu, Japan U.S. Forces Korea, Seoul, South Korea Special Operations Command Korea, Seoul, South Korea

Appendix II: Department of Defense's
Geographic Combatant Commands and Their
Service Component Commands

Geographic combatant command	Headquarters location
U.S. Southern Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Headquarters, Miami, FloridaArmy South, San Antonio, TexasAir Forces Southern, Tucson, ArizonaNaval Forces Southern Command, Jacksonville, FloridaMarine Forces South, Miami, FloridaSpecial Operations Command South, Homestead, Florida

Source: DOD. | GAO-15-243

Appendix III: Comments from the Department of Defense



LOGISTICS AND
MATERIEL READINESS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3500

FEB 27 2015

Mr. Cary Russell
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Russell:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO Draft Report, GAO-15-243, "OPERATIONAL CONTRACT SUPPORT: Actions Needed to Enhance the Collection, Integration, and Sharing Lessons Learned," dated January 27, 2015 (GAO Code 351914). Detailed comments on the report recommendations are enclosed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Berteau".

David J. Berteau

Enclosure:
As stated

**GAO Draft Report Dated January 27, 2015
GAO-15-243 (GAO CODE 351914)**

**“OPERATIONAL CONTRACT SUPPORT: ACTIONS NEEDED TO ENHANCE THE
COLLECTION, INTEGRATION AND SHARING OF LESSONS LEARNED”**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense revise existing DOD guidance, such as DOD Instruction 3020.41, to specifically detail the roles and responsibilities of the Services in collecting OCS issues.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Specific details regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Services in collecting OCS issues will be incorporated in the revised document.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the Navy and Air Force to include the services’ roles and responsibilities to collect OCS issues in comprehensive service-specific guidance on how the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force should integrate OCS.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Services should take steps to include guidance on roles and responsibilities to collect OCS issues in their respective service-specific guidance.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the Military Departments, in coordination with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), to establish an OCS training requirement for Commanders and Senior Leaders.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Services are developing OCS training requirements for commanders and senior leaders in coordination with the CJCS.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense ensure that, as the Department develops a concept for an OCS joint proponent, it include specific roles and responsibilities for a focal point responsible for integrating OCS issues from the Joint Lessons Learned Program.

DoD RESPONSE: Partially concur. DoD review and evaluation of potential courses of action to establish an OCS Joint Proponent is underway. Upon completion of this assessment the Department will determine the way ahead.

RECOMMENDATION 5: The GAO recommends that as DOD upgrades JLLIS, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff direct the Joint Staff (J-7) and Joint Staff (J-4) to implement an OCS label in JLLIS and designate a single community of practice for OCS in JLLIS.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Joint Staff is working to develop a single community of practice for OCS in JLLIS.

Appendix IV: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

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Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Carole Coffey, Assistant Director; Adam Anguiano; Mae Jones; Marcus Lloyd Oliver; Ashley Orr; James A. Reynolds; Michael Shaughnessy; and Michael Silver made key contributions to this report.

Related GAO Products

Warfighter Support: DOD Needs Additional Steps to Fully Integrate Operational Contract Support into Contingency Planning. [GAO-13-212](#). Washington, D.C.: February 8, 2013.

Contingency Contracting: Agency Actions to Address Recommendations by the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan. [GAO-12-854R](#). Washington, D.C.: August 1, 2012.

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Warfighter Support: DOD Needs to Improve Its Planning for Using Contractors to Support Future Military Operations. [GAO-10-472](#). Washington, D.C.: March 30, 2010.

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